

Disabling the Education System: A Case of Zimbabwe's Mental Genocide

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ABSTRACT

The easiest way to destroy generations and a nation is through depriving the youth their education. Education is a basic human right not a privilege as is the current case in Zimbabwe. The government of Zimbabwe of July 2018 – 2023 has decided to hide under covid 19 to deprive the innocent children their education. Schools and universities were closed in March 2020 to minimise covid 19 transmission. Little did we know that this was the opportune time for this government to kill the Zimbabwean children intellectually. The education system that was in intensive care, on oxygen, had the oxygen tanks switched off, to the government's celebration. Teachers and learners were dispatched home indefinitely. While there were celebrations in the corridors of power that we have tamed (SARS-CoV-2) Covid 19 through schools' closure, other countries upon closing schools started planning on how they were going to make education accessible during the covid 19 pandemic. The government of Zimbabwe was honeymooning abusing donated covid 19 funds. Teachers' salaries were equalling US 35 from US 520 in 2018. Indirectly it was destroying and devaluing the once admired education system. Some schools changed ownership, from being community schools to private entities at the detriment of the working class child whose parents survived on US\$1 per day. Bearing the brunt are the children of the marginalised because there is no school anymore. The teachers have no salary. The children of the government officials are enrolled in elite private schools in and outside the country. The children of most of the population whom they coerce to vote for them are deprived of education. They are killing them so that their own children and grandchildren will succeed them in future in those same government and political offices they occupy today. It is at the backdrop of these stated facts that I argue that the government of Zimbabwe 2018-2023's agenda is to suffocate the public education system in Zimbabwe to perpetuate poverty, anarchy, cronyism, despotism, and demagoguery. Data was generated qualitatively informed by the theory of Ubuntu. This theory is fit for the study because this is about human relationships. Interviews with teachers and document analysis focusing on speeches by ZANU (PF) and MDC political parties were data generation tools. Data was processed coded and conclusions were made.

KEYWORDS: education system, intensive care, demagoguery, mental genocide, marginalisation

Background of the Zimbabwe education system (Pre and Post-colonial era).

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine that the child of farm worker can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another (Nelson Mandela).

Education was a public good in Zimbabwe during the early days of Robert Gabriel Mugabe before the cancer of corruption crept into the arteries of the Zimbabwean economy. Soon after attaining independence Zimbabwe provided free education from primary up to the completion of secondary school. It must be noted that the government

did not abolish the colonial structure but emphasised on development providing financial support to the once marginalised private and missionary schools (Tisdell, 1992). These were the academic hubs of the majority of the black people. Although this approach was not part of ZANU (PF)'s socialist ideology, it had limited room to maneuver because this was the only authentic way to speedily provide Africans with the most demanded educational services (Tisdell, 1992). Further, any form of tertiary education was government sponsored. At the backdrop of such, Zimbabwe boasted of the highest literacy rate in sub-Saharan Africa (Coltart, 2018). Not only was basic education accessible, university education was government sponsored. In this regard, Nelson Mandela, said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". Then,

How to cite this paper: Tawanda Wallace Mataka | Tawanda Mukurunge | Takura Bhila "Disabling the Education System: A Case of Zimbabwe's Mental Genocide"

Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-5 | Issue-4, June 2021, pp.339-346, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd41273.pdf



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personal development was not only for the privileged, but for all.

In making education a public good, there was accelerated expansion of both primary and secondary schools in both urban and rural areas. More, teacher training and resource mobilisation was made a priority. This was done to eliminate the dualistic nature of the education system that was inherited from the colonial era.

During the colonial era the education system was “racially inequitable” (Tisdell, 1992, p.31). According to (Tisdell, 1992) “access to educational facilities was more difficult for blacks and the quality of these facilities was inferior for the blacks” (p.31). This dual type of education favoured the richer classes, in particular whites and the urban dwellers (p.31). The provision of public education was the sole responsibility of churches and other non-governmental organisations. The government offered education to the white population (in what became known as government A schools) and the urban blacks (the government B schools) (Tisdell, 1992).

The education that was being offered to blacks was meant to enlighten them to be of basic use to their white master. The black people were not supposed to be educated to the same level as Europeans. According to (Masson, 1958) “too much education could render them unfit for their proper station in life. I do not consider it right that we should educate the native in any way that will unfit him for service. He is, and always will be, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water” (p.252). Similarly, (Murphee, 1975) pointed out that African schools were prescribed with the responsibility of teaching English, value for work and instilling in pupils “habits of discipline and cleanliness” (p. 42). This was a curriculum designed to make black people subservient and to avoid questioning the world order. The system was designed to cripple the thinking capacity of blacks so that they would always experience themselves as second class citizens because of multiple mental incapacities. The system saw Africans as unskilled labourers and they did not want education to be a path of social equality for Africans (Rose & Turner, 1975). This was further perpetuated by the instructional time in schools which was designed discriminately. According to (Murphee, 1975)

The class 1 (one) schools had to be supervised by a European and were required to provide four hours of instruction per day, two hours of which were to be in industrial and agricultural subjects. This was required for 180 days a year. Class 2 schools were also under European supervision and provided two hours of instruction a day for 180 days a year. Class 3 schools had African teachers and received the smallest grant. In the absence of trained teachers and financial resources the quality of education was relatively poor (p.42).

The system was designed in such a way that Africans would remain a bank of cheap labour because the education designed for them was not transforming their thought processes and neither was it adding new skills. Similarly, (Rose & Turner, 1975) asserted,

In my opinion, schools for natives should give two hours a day to reading and writing, and three hours to manual labour. The importance of manual labour should be brought to prominence in these schools. As far as possible, I would teach at these schools every occupation that a servant is

required to do in the colony. Why is it that I employ the Red Kaffir boy as my groom and gardener? Simply because he demands half the amount that the educated boy does; he does his work as well, if not better, and is more amenable to discipline” (p.215).

The discriminatory agenda continued when the Rhodesian Front Party took control of government in 1962 and established the Rhodesian Education Commission into African Education. This was revised and introduced in 1966, and the main provisions are summarised by (Challis, 1968)

1. Seven-year primary course for all children, from 1969;
2. A two-year secondary course leading to the Rhodesian Junior Certificate;
3. A four year course of formal secondary education for approximately 12,5% of those completing their primary education;
4. A further course for those found suitable to proceed to form 6;
5. Correspondence courses supervised by a monitor in the classroom for the 50% who could not be accommodated otherwise in secondary school. The cost of the course would be met by the pupil (p.8).

On the surface this appeared progressive and developmental, but financially it was a burden to the African guardian. The expenditure by the government was to be restricted to 2% which was a drop in the ocean. The total needed was 12% and (Hirsch, 1967) labelled “standing still increase” (p.21). Any shortfall was to be covered in school fees, local government contributions, or other private players. This was indirectly placing the financial burden on middle income families. Besides rearranging the primary school system teachers were streamlined “only six teachers will be required to teach the seven classes (grades 1 to 7)” (Rich 1967, p.19). This would result in saving of the salaries of 2000 to 3000 teachers who became redundant” (Rich, 1967, p.19). It was argued that the changes were justified on the grounds of ‘progress made in recent years in teaching techniques together with large numbers of trained teachers in the system’ (Rich, 1967, p.19). This set up is almost a replica of what the new administration of 2018 to 2023 has adopted.

2018 to 2023 destruction of education

The new minister of finance in the government of Zimbabwe came up with a host of policies to reduce the country’s budget deficit. The intention on paper appeared progressive for the people of Zimbabwe but little did we know as ordinary citizens that, he, on behalf of his employers seem to have had a hidden agenda which in my opinion was to disenfranchise the child of the working class the right to basic education by underpaying teachers and starving schools of their budgetary perennial financial support. He recommended non-filling of vacant teacher posts resulting in overcrowding of classes and the non-teaching of a number of subjects because the subjects’ experts were not employed. This was a well-crafted form of mental genocide sacrificing all learners and students in Zimbabwean classrooms. Only private institutions were spared because they are self-funding and they accommodate the middle and the elite. The elite in Zimbabwe’s case are the politicians and the rich business people who in the majority double as politicians.

The ordinary working class will not be able to afford the fees and the other extras demanded continuously.

According to the Zimbabwean Constitution and United Nations Charter for human rights, education is a basic human right and all children must not be deprived of it. Section 75 of the Zimbabwean constitution states that "Every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to: a basic State-funded education, including adult basic education and further education, which the state, through reasonable legislative and other measures must make progressively available and accessible" (p.46). Along the same line the United Nations Bill of rights article 26 stipulates that:

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

It is a prerogative of the government to fulfill the demands highlighted in point number 3 above.

Despite all the legislation written above, the government of Zimbabwe has proven to be the worst human rights violator on earth as witnessed by the mental carnage in education. According to (Freire, 1976), education enables the masses to read the world and bring leaders to account because they will be able to critique them. On the contrary the current government of Zimbabwe is focusing on mental destruction of all working class children by making sure that the schools are dysfunctional and the teachers are frustrated through a meagre salary hence they will not teach. Before 2018 teachers were earning US\$20 dollars and they were happy and schools were functional. As common with all dictatorial governments the agenda is to silence the majority by making sure that they become brain dead. The government is silently creating a caste system through devaluation of education to the working class children. The child of the miner, peasant, garden boy, house maid and the orphan will resort to his/her guardian or parents' occupation because of lack of education. They are scared of dialogic nation because it is through dialogue that the problem is exposed, discussed and resolved. Resolving issues/challenges may mean shifting responsibilities of office bearers and adjusting allocation of resources. However, this process can only be carried out if a country has open democratic spaces where wisdom from elders and the educated populace converge for the betterment of the nation. It is upon this realisation that the government of Zimbabwe is again hiding behind (SARS-CoV-2) commonly known as Covid 19 to minimise days in school, renegade from its social responsibilities of providing personal protective equipment to make sure that learning environments are safe and secure. As an example one prominent leader of a teacher union who was highlighting the suffering of teachers was tortured and left for dead because he had exposed government lies concerning the

plight of teachers. Further, an investigative journalist who unearthed massive corruption by one minister of health has been in and out of prison because they want to silence him. Again, one youthful opposition official was imprisoned because he disagrees with the way the government is managing the country's affairs. These are only a few, many have been killed and some are threatened daily.

The Zimbabwean government resembles what (Fanon, 1963) stated, "In the colonial countries... the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious the agents of the government speak the language of pure force" (p. 28). In line with Fanon, the government of Zimbabwe uses security apparatus and the judiciary to suppress the voices of the masses. The Zimbabwean government has become the oppressor and silencer of its own people. This is because they noted that the informed masses are poking those areas which the securocrats think are sacred. The voices of the masses are becoming louder everyday hence as a way to silence the masses, they deprive the young generation education through incapacitating schools, tormenting and torturing teachers and teacher union leaders and incarcerating them. In order to make ends meet teachers now resort to all sorts of income generating activities.

Teachers as Buheroneros (Street hawkers/Makorokoza)

Teachers have traded their degrees to become *Buheroneros* (street hawkers or makorokoza) to sustain themselves and their families. The money that is supposed to pay teachers is shared among the elite politicians in the country to keep them subdued. Regardless of the resources that are in abundance, the same politicians siphon them out of the country clandestinely. The brutal force meted on teachers by the security apparatus if they strike is disheartening. Some lose their lives and some will be maimed. These consequences have pushed the majority to start selling wares in the streets and some have resorted to gold panning (makorokoza) in disused mines. This has left education in dire straits as pauperised teachers abandon their profession or skip the country altogether amid one of the worst crippling downturns in Zimbabwe only comparable to 2008 and partly 2009 when hyperinflation was beyond 1000%.

Disappointingly, as a common factor among all dictators, the Zimbabwean government leadership refuses to acknowledge that there is a crisis in education. The moment teacher leaders highlight their plight they are labelled opposition party agents or agents of the West whose agenda is to destabilise the country. The next comment is "Any form of demonstration to disturb the peace and tranquility prevailing in the country will be dealt with accordingly. Our security forces remain ready" (Minister of Security, 2020); the no work no pay principle will apply (Ministers of Public Service, Education and Information, 2021). They are not concerned about the welfare of the teachers. They know that their prolonged displeasure is a benefit to them because a generation will be slowly dying. Their agenda of transferring power to their own children in future happens without resistance because the ignorant cannot challenge them because they are not informed of their constitutional rights. Fear which is a result of ignorance will be ruling the majority. The Zimbabwe government is what Myanmar, 2021 and Syria since 2011 are to their citizens. Citizens are

being killed for demanding democracy. This process is perfected by misaligned political appointees.

Political appointees as Education office Bearers

There is nothing that is so degrading for a country like Zimbabwe that is loaded with experts in the field of Education to find an important ministry like the Ministry of Education being managed by an ignorant person who does not understand the intricacies of education. It may be argued that it is a political appointment but whoever appoints should understand the complexity of the ministry. It requires a seasoned academic expert who understands the "intimacies and intricacies" of the system (Mataka, Mukurunge & Bhila, 2021, p. 6). It appears the minister tasked with running the affairs of the ministry lacks knowledge of how education is supposed to be administered. Again, the secretary of education who is assumed to be the one steering the ship appears ignorant despite having been an office bearer in the ministry of education for years. It seems she is a catalyst in slowly releasing the little oxygen that was left in the system. This is witnessed by the lack of informed decisions made.

A famous quote by Douglas MacArthur cited in Anderson (2015) states that 'A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions, and the compassion to listen to the needs of others. He does not set out to be a leader, but becomes one by the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent' (Anderson, 2015). "Leadership is defined as a process of individual influence on a group of individuals aimed at the achievement of individual and or common goals of the group or the organization" (Benscotter and Rothwell, 2012). Thus without two elements of the leader and follower leadership ceases to exist (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

There is a vacuum of leadership in the ministry of education because the personnel entrusted with the ministry do not possess any of the qualities highlighted above. This is witnessed by not being proactive upon closure of schools on the 23rd of March 2020. Upon the closure of schools to minimise viral transmission, planning of the way forward should have commenced but it seems it was holiday time for Zimbabwe education officials precisely the leadership. When other countries whose political systems are organised and where democracy is real started planning on opening of schools that is when the leadership in the Ministry of Education in Zimbabwe seem to have realised that they still have schools to run. Unfortunately for Zimbabwe they had no plans in place. They started talking about online learning, television lessons and radio lessons as if they had upgraded the reception in the most marginalised areas and as if they had bought sufficient electronic gadgets such as radios, tablets, laptops, desktops to give all learners across the country. This all happened because countries such as South Africa, Botswana had their systems in check. The copying and paste approach exposed the void in the ministry. *A good leader (Ross Perot) "Lead and inspire people. Don't try to manage and manipulate people. Inventories can be managed but people must be led"* This principle appeared to be a pipe dream for the caliber of leadership imposed on the education ministry in Zimbabwe.

It was only after teachers and teacher union leaders expressed their dismay at such reckless talking that they started pretending to be doing something but still it was hot air. This was a sign of failed leadership. As a result schools

had to go out of their way to buy thermometers and made sure that water was available. Some schools were assisted by well-wishers to drill boreholes but once it was realised that they were not aligned to ZANU (PF) they were forced to stop. This shows how naïve and selfish ZANU (PF) is. These facilities are for the children not for the teachers. Disappointingly the same children are for their party members. This resonates with what was pronounced earlier that these ZANU (PF) politicians do not care about the marginalised but care only about themselves. This is a public school where no child, granddaughter, grandson or any close relative of theirs is learning hence the non-caring attitude. Water is a basic necessity which help fight (SARS-CoV-2) covid 19 because it is a catalyst to cleanliness.

According to (Muteswa, 2015) good leaders possess the following attributes;

- Confidence
- Toughness and inspiration
- Ability to communicate the vision and values
- Establish the right culture in the organisation
- Honesty, integrity and transparency
- Humility
- Learn from failure and bad experiences
- Commitment
- Ability to identify and attract talent (p. 2)

This is contrary to the so called leaders running the ministry of education. Their major weakness is the lack of all the attributes highlighted. I am of the strong view that with the way they have been running the ministry, there is neither teacher nor education official unless he/she is a ZANU (PF) beneficiary who has confidence in them because they run the ministry through threats instead of dialogue. A number of veiled threats directed at teachers and education officials were published in the state owned Herald of 2020/2021. Instead of attracting the best talent in the ministry through teacher engagement they chase them away through threats. If you suggest a way forward you are termed a renegade. This seems to run in the DNA of the paranoid ZANU (PF) regime. I am of the opinion that this level of hostility and adamancy is a result of the regime personnel not having any of their children learning through the public education system that they are working tirelessly to destroy. Instead they seem to celebrate the demise of the education system because it means more opportunities for their children and relatives.

Lack of emotional intelligence

One may argue why I am going to the extremes of illuminating all these issues when the central issue is disabling of the public education system by the ZANU (PF) regime. I intend to justify my argument through exposing how the regime is accelerating the rate of destruction of the once admired education system.

It is without doubt that "emotional intelligence is a critical leadership aspect for a person to be called a good leader" (Muteswa, 2015. p.3). Emotional intelligence "involves the process in which a person can control his or her behaviour in order to maintain and develop day-to-day relationships with others effectively (Goleman, 1998 p. 94). According to Goleman (2000, p. 80) emotional intelligence encompasses four basic capabilities namely; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skill. Taking a closer assessment of the leaders running the ministry of education and their associates, they seem to lack the four

capabilities. According to (Goleman, 1998) self-awareness – “generally emotionally self-aware managers are capable of sensing their emotional feelings anytime” (p.96). In addition “self-management - self-controlled leaders are capable of regulating or minimizing destructive feelings or thoughts before they take any action” (Goleman, 2000, p.80). It is regrettable that the leader of government is devoid of the attributes alluded above. The toxic traits of threats are transferred from the head of government to all his subordinates. He is well known to be a ruthless person who can order permanent removal of any individual whom he perceives to be an obstacle in his way. It is not surprising that almost all ministers in government have become the law unto themselves. The most common threat from the minister is that there will be mass firing of teachers if they do not return to work (Herald, April, 2021). He utters this without addressing the teachers’ grievances.

Further, leaders should be socially aware. Empathetic managers or leaders always take into consideration the feelings of other people before making decisions (Goleman, 2000, p.80). The teachers’ salaries and their conditions of service were altered to their detriment without any consultation. Altering of teachers’ salaries was an overnight decision that found teachers bankrupt and incapacitated. This was a collectively made decision by the government. It is not surprising that I have continuously argued that the main agenda is to incapacitate and destroy slowly the once vibrant education system. There was no tangible reason to reduce teachers’ salaries to nothing except for destroying the education system through suffocating them through hunger because at the end, they will not be capable of doing their duties amicably. In the same vein, expert leaders have excellent social skills. Leaders with good social skills “have various abilities when dealing with issues and they always prefer to find a win-win solution. They believe in teamwork, transparency and accountability of actions” (Goleman, 2000, p. 80). This is a crime that these leaders from ZANU (PF) would not want to commit. A case in point is 2020 opening of schools after the suspension of the lockdown, the ministry of education officials lied to the whole nation that they have bought personnel protective equipment for teachers and learners for all schools countrywide, only for the lies to be unearthed by the Teachers Progressive Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) and Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ). That was only when they reversed a hurriedly made decision to hoodwink teachers and learners into submission. The minister of finance on the other hand lied that salaries have been adjusted yet in actual fact it was a lie. It had to take three months of withholding labour by teachers and so many sporadic demonstrations by learners at parliament for the government to accede to teachers’ demands. Again those three months allowed the government to scatter a few PPEs to a few schools but the majority of the schools were struggling to get them because the government did not meet its part of the bargain. They were buying their own PPEs. However, some teachers were victims of Covid 19 and some lost their lives in the line of duty but nothing of this sort was reported officially by the government like what other progressive democracies do. They acknowledge their frontline heroes. In Zimbabwe there is no value placed in the life of a teacher. She/he is treated like disposable material that is waiting to be thrown away after use and after its sell by date. If you are a true leader who is a servant of the people why sacrifice innocent children and teachers by sending them to schools that do not have all basics to fight

(SARS-CoV-2) covid 19. True leaders protect the vulnerable but this is a taboo worth not practicing within the ZANU (PF) run government. Every time they abuse resources through corruption resulting in some sectors lacking they blame the American and British governments for imposing sanctions yet they are the ones sanctioning themselves. Recently, the Minister of Education upon being questioned on the poor grade 7 pass rate, he blamed teachers and sanctions. This resonates with my earlier argument that the ministry is being managed by an ignorant minister who cares less about the education of the masses. The current regime has sanctioned the whole country through corruption which has made Hopewell Chin’ono an award winning journalist to become a prominent visitor of Chikurubi maximum prison because of unearthing deep rooted corruption in the current government.

It is at the backdrop of such that the education system in Zimbabwe is slowly being suffocated at the expense of the working class child but to the benefit of the ruling elite and those who are privileged with financial riches that enable them to pay private schools’ fees.

Theoretical Framework

Ubuntu African Philosophy

A person is a person through other persons. None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think or walk, or speak or behave as human beings unless we learned it from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human (Tutu, 2004, p.25)

This is a principle that the current head of government, ministers of education, finance, public service and their subordinates in the government of Zimbabwe are going against. Teachers and learners in public schools need their support, counsel, guidance, direction and attention to be progressive human beings. These are expected to uphold the spirit of Ubuntu in their leadership of the ministry of education. The bedrock of the Ubuntu philosophy lies in the Nguni language which according to (Moloketi, 2009) implies that “a person is a person because of or through others” (p.9). In the African society, it is a way of showing love, empathy and compassion to others. It is against these key principles that I argue that office bearers are teaming up to destroy the education system in Zimbabwe. They are going against all the cardinal principles of leadership. There is glaring evidence of lack of compassion for the people they are appointed to serve. It is without doubt that the leadership from the leader of government and his appointees, the ministers and secretaries are not fully committed to serve the children of Zimbabwe. In support, (Mandela, 2006, p.xxv) argued that servant leadership which is equated to Ubuntu should express “compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interest of building and maintaining communities with justice and equal caring”. Leaders in government are entrusted with lives of the whole country hence they are supposed to exercise the spirit of Ubuntu. That as it may, the ZANU (PF) regime, through its educational leadership structure, is bent on destroying future livelihoods through unjust and discriminatory practices in education. This is an antithesis of the Ubuntu African philosophy the country is built around. It may be argued that the government or ZANU (PF) is structured around Eurocentric views because their way of doing things is unAfrican and it lacks any form of empathy.

In as much as they may blame sanctions and other ills which they hide behind, all the problems bedeviling the education system of Zimbabwe are a result of lack of love for the majority of Zimbabwean children. Besides the blame game which has become the regime's song, they should show respect through consulting teachers, teacher union leaders, parents and other stockholders for a better way forward. This is because the Ubuntu philosophy is structured around group solidarity which in my opinion is key to the survival of the education sector (Mbigi and Maree, 2005). The education sector operate in a triangular form, which constitute, teachers, learners and parents. The adhesive to hold these together is a caring government that takes the mandate of capacitating all parties seriously. However, the current government is doing the opposite. The dysfunctionality of the education sector is blamed on the teachers and sanctions which is not the case. One government spokesperson had this to say, "Teachers are responsible for dismal grade 7 results in some schools across the country" (Herald, January, 2021). These comments are passed by someone who seemingly does not grasp the issues of access in education. This comes not as a surprise because the spokesperson is seem to be an 'airhead' incapacitated from the neck upwards.

In the spirit of Ubuntu hands of the whole government and presidium should have been on the deck to help the education of the learners and students thrive. Instead the government through its minister is busy extorting money through the so called online learning, a platform which is nonexistent in almost all public schools. It is argued that an educated nation is a healthy nation. According to (Korster, 1996), Ubuntu illustrates "the interconnectedness, common humanity and responsibility of individuals to each other" (p.99). The spirit of Ubuntu is being disregarded by the regime because it is scared that its grandstanding will be exposed. The same regime shows that it does not have the people at heart by refusing the leader of the largest opposition party in Zimbabwe to build a school that was going to serve the marginalised in his community. This is because they want all the glory to be theirs if ever it is going to be there. All this goes against the spirit of Ubuntu and shared responsibility.

In practice, the true spirit of Ubuntu promotes openness, availability to those who look up to you and in this context, teachers, learners, and parents look up to the government. Further, the government should be affirming that learners, teachers and parents are key stakeholders in the education system but on the contrary the government feels threatened by the three stakeholders. Instead of dialoguing with them they are threatened and sometimes killed.

In the spirit of Ubuntu, "a person's behaviour is governed by an ability to reason and think within the community context" (Maphisa, 1994, p.^). This is reinforced by a rational behaviour which is premised on human ethics such as love, sympathy, kindness and sharing (Tutu, 2004). The ZANU (PF) regime running the affairs of Zimbabwe has thrown all these important tenets in the gutter because of its selfishness. It is not only the education sector that has been run down even the health delivery system is dysfunctional. This is due to the rampant levels of corruption within the ZANU (PF) government. The country is ranked 157 out of 180 in corruption indexing. This reflects how deep corruption is (Transparency International, 2020). The ZANU (PF) regime has lost corporate consciousnesses, where allocation and sharing of wealth equally is very African.

Methodology

This study intends to illuminate the rate at which the government of Zimbabwe is perpetuating mental genocide on the children of Zimbabwe through depriving them education. This is being done through the non-provision of Covid 19 personnel protective equipment to learners and teachers, devaluing of teachers' salaries from US\$520.00 to under US \$ 35.00. Documentary evidence and online conversations with teachers, students, political figures from both ZANU (PF) and opposition figures were sources of data. Online data generation was the appropriate way because of the physical inaccessibility to research participants. The Internet-mediated research (IMR) qualitative process was the most suitable because this issue needed to be studied in its authenticity (Hewson, 2003). It has the advantage of expanded geographical reach and eliminating travel costs and time efficiency (Hewson, 2003). The data was generated from a conveniently selected population which was accessible online because meetings were restricted due to SARs-CoV-2 (Covid 19) (Paton, 2002). The choice of participants was relevant because teachers, were largely affected by the government decisions.

Findings and Discussion

The findings from the fifteen teachers who are employed by the government expressed disappointment regarding the downgrading of their salaries without notice among other issues. Below are some of the concerns raised by teachers regarding their salaries.

Teacher 1: It has shown that education isn't among the priorities of government. Security and Health are government's priority pillars regarding remuneration. Security officers and health personnel are getting more than US\$520 inclusive of allowances. Imagine two years ago I was getting US\$520 but now it is under US\$35. That is demotivating. The sidelined educators have taken a let's wait and see attitude which has thrown education of the learners into the bin. No proper learning takes place when the educators are not motivated to execute their duties.

The teachers' sentiments are replicating what was happening during the colonial era. During the colonial era the education system was "racially inequitable" (Tisdell, 1992, p.31). According to (Tisdell, 1992) "access to educational facilities was more difficult for blacks and the quality of these facilities was inferior for the blacks" (p.31). This dual type of education favoured the richer classes, in particular whites and the urban dwellers (p.31). This time race has been replaced by political elites in ZANU (PF) and those deemed politically connected. They are the ones enjoying education at the expense of the general populace of Zimbabwe. There is recolonization of black people by other black people and in this case those that are ZANU (PF) affiliated.

Similar sentiments were illuminated by Teacher 2 in highlighting that the quality of education is becoming highly compromised.

Teacher 2. The sectarian approach on remuneration grossly affect professionalism. This would adversely affect the quality of content as well as affecting the ultimate product which will fall short of expected attributes at tertiary institutions. Yeah it seems teachers are the lowest paid civil servants while uniformed forces take the lead especially the army. The reason is not clear to the general public but it appears to be political. It seems Education sector is being led by someone who does

not have knowledge and interest in it. It shows the way education is valued by our national leaders. Likewise everyone else won't value it too.

The short/long term effects include (a) loss of motivation in both teachers and administrators (b) decline in educational standards (c) erosion on the value of education by the general populace. (d) Increase in teacher vending (e) high staff turnover (f) increase in brain drain (g) increase in private schools.

What has been illuminated is equivalent to some of the principles that were guiding the Rhodesian curriculum. The education that was being offered to blacks was meant to enlighten them to be of basic use to their white master. The black people were not supposed to be educated to the same level as Europeans. According to (Masson, 1958) "too much education could render them unfit for their proper station in life. I do not consider it right that we should educate the native in any way that will unfit him for service. He is, and always will be, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water" (p.252). Similarly, (Murphee, 1975) pointed out that African schools were prescribed with the responsibility of teaching English, value for work and instilling in pupils "habits of discipline and cleanliness" (p. 42). This appears to be where the ZANU (PF) government of Zimbabwe is taking us to. The working class children are spending time in mines scavenging for gold to make ends meet. Some of these children are used as runners by these ZANU (PF) elites and some are doing the political dirty jobs of these politicians because of lack of education. Once the education system is dead their supply chain of cheap and free labour will be in abundance. This is facilitated by a hungry teacher as a result of ZANU (PF)'s misrule and maltreatment of teachers.

Teacher 3 *Teachers are not getting allowances like other civil servants and they are lowly paid. Teachers will not deliver lessons well because they will be demotivated. Therefore the pass rate will be negatively affected and learners' performance will deteriorate. I sympathise with teachers because of this inferiority complex. The education will be affected in the country and they won't be able to look after their families.*

Teacher 4; 5;15 *It is extremely demotivating. We are expected to deliver yet not recognized or rewarded for the efforts.*

Teacher, 6 *Zimbabwe has a military government which is not favourable to teachers. Teachers are lowly paid compared to other civil servants because they are labeled supporters of opposition parties. Uniformed forces are highly paid to protect the government from demonstrations from the grumbling masses. Our leaders/rulers are not educated as compared to teachers hence the leaders try by all means to downgrade teachers by underpaying them. In addition, there is going to be a production of docile generations, poor and non-directional education system, policies aligned to the ruling party, a poor curriculum to serve the interests of the ruling party, an education system run by retired brigadiers hence command education. Their children should be the leaders of tomorrow, They make sure they cripple the education system so that our children won't benefit.*

Teacher 7;8;9. *Discrimination- there is no salary to talk about most teachers are earning 8000 rtgs as it is called. Then a raft of allowances with dubious names such as covid allowances this is around another 8000-10000 rtgs of converted to zim dollar at a black market rate of 120. The teachers take home a salary of 130US. There is no hard cash in the bank. One will need to*

transfer it to Eco cash line (as some shops or businesses do not have swipe facilities) or you use as swipe. The transfer and bank charges are just exorbitant. When there is this discrimination on salaries they are poor or pathetic very low as compared to the army. Some members in certain departments are now earning salaries in US dollars not the teacher. Some departments like the psc get humbers to cushion them, not teachers. Directors in the psc and high rank officials in the army police psc get vehicles and why not school heads them all serve ministries.

Effect of disparities: When you kill the golden goose that lay the eggs you backstab the nation. The teacher is now fighting to survive out of the box. The children will suffer more because they voluntarily mark books overnight. Teachers used to put extra time to help learners pass but now that time has been taken over by deals, hustling to earn money. You can steal time from work in order to bring US dollars. The syllabi can no longer be completed. The system of discrimination is helping create a half baked nation that has no education value, no behaviour value. Already, the kids are into drugs, child immoralities, stealing etc because the one who used to map them into real human beings to be proud Zimbabweans has applied brakes. The future economy of the country will also bear witness to this collapse in education. Closure of schools due to the impasse and covid 19.

From what has been highlighted by the participants, the Zimbabwean government resembles what (Fanon, 1963) stated, "In the colonial countries... the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious the agents of the government speak the language of pure force" (p. 28). It seems from the majority of the responses, military forces are a priority compared to education. This seems to imply that the system is afraid of an uprising from its own people. In that regard, the military is paid well to suppress any descending voices especially that of teachers. In addition, (Freire, 1976), argues that education enables the masses to read the world and bring leaders to account because they will be able to critique them. It is against this background that the children of Zimbabwe are being denied what is rightfully theirs. Further, the practices enacted by the Zimbabwean government are the opposite of Section 75 of the Zimbabwean constitution which states that "Every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to: a basic State-funded education, including adult basic education and further education, which the state, through reasonable legislative and other measures must make progressively available and accessible" (p.46). This is being done through nonpayment of teachers a living wage and the rotational system of school attendance.

Recommendations

Based from the findings above and recommendations from literature the government of Zimbabwe must exercise Ubuntu, which is a key principle to grow the nation and empower the education sector. As a starting point, teachers' living wage must be restored and be treated with love not hatred. Further, I propose that the government of Zimbabwe especially the leadership exercise the following attributes as presented by (Muteswa, 2015) good leaders possess the following attributes;

- Confidence
- Toughness and inspiration
- Ability to communicate the vision and values

- Establish the right culture in the organisation
- Honesty integrity and transparency
- Humility
- Learn from failure and bad experiences
- Commitment
- Ability to identify and attract talent (p. 2)

These are attributes central towards the success of the education sector in Zimbabwe. Again they can enable the country to reclaim the lost glory in education. Zimbabwe was one of the countries with the highest literacy rates in the world (Coltart, 2018). Further, the government must not use threats, must not injure, and eliminate its employees because they are voicing their concerns. Additionally, equality among all government employees should be practiced. More so, dismissals are not a way of solving disputes, disputes must be negotiated to finality. Lastly, corruption should be exorcised in the society especially in government. Corruption is the reason why these problems bedeviling the education sector are not ending.

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